



2024 BNSF Brakeman/Helper Arbitration Award from Tentative Agreement Q&As

General / Implementation

Q1: When will these changes take place?

A1: The awards will be effective beginning December 19, 2024.

On December 19th, overtime after 11 hours for through-freight crews will begin, as well as the new ETD pay for yard crews; additionally, certain unassigned brakeman calls will be reduced systemwide (STAS, Transfer Jobs, Work Trains, etc.). Following that, initial notifications of changes to assigned brakeman/helper positions will be made via CCBCAST on December 20, 2024, and effective December 27, 2024.

Moving forward, BNSF will strategically consider all jobs with assigned brakemen/helpers and reduce some positions in phases through mid-2025. However, when the awards/TAs are fully implemented there may be brakeman/helper positions remaining. More detailed information will be shared with impacted team members.

Q2: Why is the award being implemented before the holidays?

A2: As noted in A1, unassigned positions – those filled off the extra board – are the only positions being reduced before Christmas. Following those, BNSF selected approximately 80 assigned positions, spanning the entire network and all SMART-TD General Committees, for implementation on December 27th; these are intentionally planned for after December 24th, 25th, and 26th to minimize disrupting employees' holiday plans and holiday pay. Additionally, the cyclical post-Christmas reduction in volume was a time these changes could be implemented with as minimal of an impact as possible.

Q3: How will an employee know their brakeman/helper position is being reduced?

A3: Prior to reducing assigned brakeman/helper positions at a location, a CCBCAST will be published with all jobs reducing to single-groundperson assignments. After at least a 5-day posting, bid sheets will be run to fill the positions. The CCBCAST will look similar to the example below:

Effective 1/27/25, the following assignments at Fort Worth, TX will be converted from a 3 Person crew to a 2 Person Crew. All employees assigned to the Conductor/Brakeman positions being converted to 2-person crew will work their assigned shifts on 1/26/25. Their assignments will be abolished at the completion of their shift and re-established as Conductor and Engineer only jobs.

Employees will need to update their Permanent bid sheet preferences prior to the SMART-TD batch run at 11am CT on 1/26/25 and 1/27/25 to ensure they are assigned to the highest preferred job available on their permanent bid sheet.

Affected Local Jobs include:

- FTWXXX1-03 | FTWXXX1-05
- FTWXXX1-03 | FTWXXX1-05

Note: Engineer positions associated with the crew conversions will not be reassigned or re-bulletined.



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- Q4: What positions will be rebulletined (Engineer/Foreman/Helper)?
- A4: Only the Conductor/Brakeman and Foreman/Helper positions on impacted jobs will be rebulletined; the CCBCASTs will note this as well.
- Q5: If a crew is called with a three-person crew, but the helper/brakeman position cannot be filled due to manpower issues, can that job be run with a single groundperson?
- A5: Yes, in unassigned service the train may operate without the brakeman position after December 19th. In assigned service (L, R, or Y symbols), if the brakeman/helper position cannot be filled, trains may operate with a two-person crew after the assigned service changes effective December 27th.
- Q6: Does the same (A5) apply for RCO positions?
- A6: Not at the present time. Until further notice, an RCO crew consists of a foreman and helper. If unavailable, it may be called and work as a conventional two-person crew (engineer/foreman) if the operation allows, but not as a single person RCO job.
- Q7: How can someone view in TSS/TSS Xpress whether a job is scheduled to have a single groundperson or two ground service employees?
- A7: CCTO will show that a crew is a single groundperson crew, and therefore will not be called with a brakeman or helper, with a notation that it's a two-person crew "(2PC)".
- Q8: How does an employee claim pay for items in the award/TA?
- A8: All reduced-crew and overtime pay will be calculated automatically; ETD payments will continue to be claimed under code 34.

Article I – Productivity and Crew Utilization

- Q1: Will employees working in assigned road or yard service who are eligible for a short crew allowance from a previous Crew Consist Agreement or modification receive the two (2) hour payment if working without a brakeman/switchman?
- A1: Yes, those employees will receive the two (2) hour payment in addition to the short crew allowance from previous Crew Consist Agreements or modifications.
- When such employees work *with* a brakeman/helper, they will not receive a two (2) hour payment, but will receive any applicable short crew allowance provided in previous Crew Consist Agreements or modifications. Payments cannot be duplicated or pyramided.
- Q2: What jobs are eligible for the two (2) hour payment?
- A2: Jobs that were assigned two-groundperson jobs prior to this award whose second groundperson was reduced, or new jobs that would have had an assigned second groundperson prior to this award, are entitled to the payment. This includes Yard jobs whose helper positions are reduced, Road Switchers and Locals whose brakeman position was reduced, and assigned Work Trains. It does *not* include short turnaround service, unassigned work trains, or other unassigned freight service where a brakeman was previously required by agreement, but not assigned.



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- Q3: How does an employee claim pay for items in the awards/TAs?
- A3: All reduced-crew and overtime pay will be calculated automatically; ETD payments will continue to be claimed under code 34.
- Q4: Are employees hired after the effective date of this award entitled to the two (2) hour payment if working without a brakeman/switchman?
- A4: Yes.
- Q5: If BNSF calls an extra brakeman or helper for the same job any three (3) days out of a seven (7) day rolling period, is BNSF required to bulletin and assign the job in accordance with Section III (C) of the 2023 Article VI and VII Agreement?
- A5: Yes.
- Q6: In the yard, does BNSF plan to reduce the second groundperson for only conventional jobs or RCO as well?
- A6: Initially, the reduction will only be for conventional jobs.
- Q7: How many moves / what work may 1-groundperson crews perform without penalty?
- A7: The award removes move restrictions *between* terminals; however, existing agreement terms still apply for moves within a terminal (i.e. initial/final move limitations). These are different for Former BN and Former ATSF. Upon implementation of the award, crews still may not exceed:

Former ATSF:

Former Eastern/Western: One move at the initial or final terminal

Former Coastlines and Northern/Southern: Two moves at the initial or final terminal

All former BN:

Three moves at the initial or final terminal

Article II – Road Utility Position

- Q1: When will Road Utility Positions (RUP) be implemented?
- A1: This part of the award will be evaluated in February and March of 2025.
- Q2: If an employee was working a ground-service position on September 5, 2024, do they need to bid on the RUP roster?
- A2: No, all employees in ground service at noon on September 5th will be automatically added to the roster in seniority order.
- Q3: What if the employee was not working in ground service? (Engineer, Exempt, etc.)
- A3: When the bulletin is posted for RUP positions, all other employees with a ground service date will have 30 days to bid on the roster.
- Q4: Can RUPs create switch lists? Work like a FBYM?
- A4: These are road utility positions, not yard utility positions. It is not contemplated that they would mark switch lists.

- Q5: What occupation code will a utility position be?
A5: Yard Utility Occupation Code remains unchanged (18); Road Utility Occupation Code will be determined at a later date.
- Q6: Will the RUP fall into already established allocations for layoffs and scheduled vacation weeks?
A6: Yes – where applicable, it will be determined in the future whether the position falls on SF or BN.
- Q7: May an RUP assist a crew in one direction and then a different crew in another direction (for locations with pools that operate multiple ways out of the terminal)?
A7: Yes.
- Q8: Will an RUP be a certified position and need to territory-qualify on everything possible?
A8: It is a certified position (unless the FRA determines otherwise) and RUPs will need to maintain qualifications.
- Q9: If a person is removed from their RUP job, do they get a “full displacement” or do they displace the junior employee?
A9: They will have a full displacement and their bid sheet will be run.

Article III – Utility Qualification Roster

- Q1: How will employees who are on a leave of absence be placed on the Utility Qualification Roster?
A1: If the employee on a ground service assignment prior to going on the leave of absence they will be placed on the roster under Article III(A) in seniority order. If the employee was on an engineer assignment prior to going on the leave absence and wishes to make application for the Utility Qualification Roster, they would be placed on the roster under Article III(B) in seniority order.
- Q2: Does the RUP roster include BK 01-05 districts?
A2: Those districts would have separate rosters.
- Q3: How will prior right conductors be handled for determining roster placement?
A3: NH99 has already established placement to govern where this could be an issue.
- Q4: If an engineer gets demoted, do they get a spot on the roster at demoted time? What date is used for roster placement?
A4: The engineer may request a date in accordance with the award/TA while working as an engineer, per Article III(B). They will be ranked in seniority order based on their earliest ground seniority date.

Article IV – End of Train Devices (ETD)

- Q1: Are yard employees hired after the effective date of this award entitled to the ETD payment?
A1: Yes.



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- Q2: How does an employee claim the ETD payment?
- A2: ETD payments will continue to be claimed under Code 34. The ETD payment is a one-hour payment for yard crews. Road payments are unchanged by this award.

Article V – Overtime for Pool Freight Service

- Q1: Who qualifies for overtime after 11 hours?
- A1: All employees covered by SMART-TD agreements (conductors, brakemen, foremen, helpers, etc.). However, it must be noted that the overtime only applies when working in through-freight service.
- Q2: How will trip extenders be applied to Article V of the TA?
- A2: Trip rate extenders will still apply for pools where overtime currently begins prior to eleven (11) hours. However, in no circumstance will overtime for any through-freight pool begin later than eleven (11) hours on-duty.
- Q3: Are employees hired after the effective date of this award entitled to the overtime payment?
- A3: Yes.
- Q4: How does an employee claim the enhanced overtime pay?
- A4: The payment for overtime after 11 hours will be automatically paid on the working ticket.

Article VI – Protection (Ready Work Boards)

- Q1: How will boards flow when filling temporary vacancies?
- A1: Extra Board -> Ready Work Board -> Canvas
- Q2: How will boards flow when filling permanent vacancies?
- A2: Ready Work Board -> USB -> Furlough
- Q3: Where does the RWB fall in the calling order, specifically with regard to canvassing?
- A3: As noted in A1, the RWB is available when all extra boards are exhausted – prior to canvassing.
- Q4: If the first out person missed a call for service, is the second out employee on the RWB required to take the call?
- A4: Yes; the RWB works like a typical extra board with regard to calls for service.
- Q5: When will RWB positions be available?
- A5: RWB positions will be available at a location when a protected employee or employees (as defined by Article VI(A) of the TA) cannot hold a working assignment at that location. At that time, RWB positions will be added at a location for bid, eligible to any protected employee who has been working at that location for a minimum of thirty (30) days.



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- Q6: How many RWB positions will be available at a location?
- A6: The number of permanent RWB positions is determined by the calculation in Article VI(B); the number of “open” slots may ebb and flow as the needs of the business demand employees remain in active service.
- Q7: If a specific location has both BN and ATSF extra boards, which rate will be used for the RWB board – the ATSF combo board rate, or the BN brakeman board rate?
- A7: The applicable ATSF combo board rate will be used for the RWB board at that location.
- Q8: If an employee cannot hold at a location, will that employee be furloughed?
- A8: When an employee cannot hold at a location, they may bid on the RWB at that location; those bids will be accepted in seniority order. If there are no available slots, employees may chase their seniority to another location, or they will be furloughed in reverse seniority order.
- Q9: Can an employee from Location A bid to a RWB position at Location B?
- A9: In order to be eligible to obtain a position on a RWB, the employee must 1) be a “protected employee”, and 2) the protected employee must have been working at the RWB location for at least thirty days prior to bidding to be on the board (30 days from first start).
- Q10: If BNSF utilizes employees off the RWB at a specific location more than 20% (based on the size of the RWB at that location) during a week, will a position be added to the trainman’s extra board at that location.
- A10: Yes. One position will be added for every 20% usage of the board and will remain on the board for at least seven (7) days.
- Example: At Location X there are a total of 10 employees on the RWB. During the week the RWB was utilized 4 times (40% usage). On the next board change day, BNSF would need to add 2 positions to the road extra board and those positions would have to remain on the board for a minimum of seven (7) days.
- Q11: Re: A4, when will this occur? Every day or only on Monday board change day?
- A11: The changes will occur on board change day.
- Q12: If there are open positions at any location where there are employees on the RWB, is BNSF obligated to recall the employees on the RWB?
- A12: Yes.
- Q13: Are all open positions considered, or only open ground service positions?
- A13: Only ground service positions.
- Q14: Can employees make their needed territorial qualification trips prior to being instructed by BNSF?
- A14: Yes, employees may notify Workforce that they wish to make a territorial trip any time any time within sixty (60) days of that qualification expiring and will be allowed to do so.



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- Q15: Are employees working as an engineer, yardmaster, or otherwise detached considered “covered” employees?
- A15: Yes.
- Q16: Will the RWB be decreased when employees are needed?
- A16: Yes, the number of open slots will be decreased. The number of permanent positions will remain constant.
- Q17: When calculating the number of RWB slots, are brakeman/helper starts from all boards counted? For example, when a conductor extra board/pool protects a brakeman/helper start?
- A17: Yes.
- Q18: Can an employee be called back to active service prior to 120 days due to manpower needs?
- A18: Yes – this is covered in Article VI(J). It states, “Trainmen assigned to the Ready Work Board are subject to recall in reverse seniority order and must accept recall within forty-eight (48) hours of notification. This board will be recalled ahead of trainmen assigned to USB, WRB, or other similar boards.
- Q19: If an employee on the RWB does not answer a call for work, do they EMC/LOC?
- A19: Yes
- Q20: Will employees on the RWB have some kind of rest cycle or are they always available for an on-duty call?
- A20: The RWB’s form of a rest cycle is when the first-out employee foots the board each day.
- Q21: When employees are recalled to service, what order does that occur?
- A21: RWB, then Unassigned Service Boards/Work Retention Boards, then Furloughed employees
- Q22: In Article VI J(2)(b), does the employee lose protection forever and at all locations?
- A22: Yes. If the employee fails to report within 48 hours when recalled from the RWB, they forfeit their rights to all RWB positions going forward.
- Q23: How does RWB interact with rebid?
- A23: There should be no conflict with rebid. Employees on the RWB are governed by the terms of the award regarding when they can bid on and off the board; if they are eligible to bid off the RWB, they would simply update their bid sheets as an active employee would.



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RWB Example

At Location A there are the following brakemen/helper positions that are subject to elimination under Article I(A) of the TA:

Brakeman Positions – 4

Helper Positions – 16

Total Positions – 20

Over the course of the previous 12 months, the extra boards protected brakeman or helper positions at Location “A” a total of 984 times. 984 divided by 260 (as indicated by Article VI(B)) equals 3.78 – which rounds up to 4 additional positions.

This results in a total of 24 RWB positions for Location A.

RWB positions will only be opened up for placement at Location A in the event that a protected employee or employees (as defined by Article VI(A)) cannot hold a working assignment, including the extra board, at Location A as a result of the elimination of positions or reduction in volume. At that point, RWB positions (up to a total of 24) will be added at Location A for bid eligible to any protected employee who has been working at Location A for a minimum of thirty (30) days. RWB slots will be awarded to protected employees in seniority order. If no bids are received for RWB slots, the junior protected employees who cannot hold working positions at Location A will be placed on the RWB slots.

Article VII – Signing Bonus

Q1: When should employees expect the signing bonus to be paid?

A1: BNSF expects to have the bonuses paid no later than December 31, 2024.

Q2: Are employees who are on a Leave of Absence because they accepted a promotion, or accepted official positions with BNSF, eligible for the signing bonus?

A2: No.

Q3: Will employees who are detached to a SMART-TD position, on a trainman USB, in New Hire Training, or in LETP class qualify for the signing bonus?

A3: So long as all other qualifications are met, yes.

Q4: How are employees who went on a leave of absence, on vacation, or were dismissed prior to the September 5, 2024 date for the signing bonus handled in relation to qualifying for the bonus?

A4: If the employee was on a ground service assignment prior to going on the leave of absence, vacation or being dismissed, they will qualify for the signing bonus once they have met the conditions of Article VII(C). If the employee was on an engineer assignment prior to going on the leave absence, vacation or being dismissed, they will not qualify for the signing bonus.

Note: Employees who were on vacation do not have to meet the 30-days of service condition prior to qualifying for payment of the signing bonus.



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Other / General

- Q1: How do I add a brakeman or helper back to a job when needed (case-by-case basis):
- A1: To request a helper, do so through CCYXREQ; to request a brakeman, do so via the train call process.
- Q2: What will happen to shuttle jobs/agreements?
- A2: Initially, these will remain in place. Additionally, if any changes do occur, these awards have cancellation clauses that would need to be honored, so there will be advance notice beyond the 5-day notice to rebulletin.
- Q3: Will BNSF keep existing brakeman extra boards?
- A3: While there is not an obligation to keep brakeman extra boards where they will no longer be needed (per the 2023 Article VI and VII agreement), those boards will remain where they will continue to protect a sufficient number of vacancies.